

Notes & News: Chile - Enforcement vessel threatened - Global Ocean Refuges - MPAs and human health - Ecosystem approach - MPA readings - Top MPA News articles of 2018

Chile announces southernmost MPA in the Americas

On 22 January, Chile announced the designation of what is now the southernmost protected area in the Americas: the 144,390-km² Diego Ramírez-Drake Passage Marine Park. The new MPA provides habitat for endangered species such as the gray-headed albatross, the black-browed albatross, the southern rockhopper penguin, and the macaroni penguin. It is a unique place on the planet: the Diego Ramírez Islands and Drake Passage mark the southern limit of sub-Antarctic ecosystems in the hemisphere, and the transition between Antarctic and sub-Antarctic biodiversity. A press release from the Pew Charitable Trusts [is here](#), and media coverage [is here](#).

Also in January, Chile announced designation of the Kawésqar National Reserve, which covers 25,900 km² of water around 3104 islands in Chile's Magallanes region. It is home to humpback whales, endemic Chilean dolphins, and two endangered species – sei whales and southern river otters. A Pew press release [is here](#).

Fishers threaten enforcement vessel inside MPA

In the [Vaquita Refuge](#) in the northern Gulf of California, Mexico, gillnetting is banned in a bid to protect the world's 30 or so remaining vaquita, the smallest cetacean on Earth. But the black market for totoaba – an endangered fish whose swim bladder fetches big money on the international market (US \$10,000 or more per bladder) – leads local poachers to disobey the gillnet ban. As a result, the gillnets pose the biggest threat to the remaining existence of vaquita, snagging and drowning a few individuals a year.

In January this situation came to a head when an enforcement vessel in the refuge was surrounded by 35 fishing skiffs operated by individuals who threatened the enforcement crew with Molotov cocktails and other means. The enforcement vessel was owned and operated by Sea Shepherd, an NGO that is approved by the Mexican government to patrol the Vaquita Refuge with Mexican Navy personnel onboard. The poachers dispersed as a Navy helicopter arrived overhead. Video footage of the incident [is here](#). Media coverage [is here](#). In late February, Sea Shepherd [announced](#) it was adding a second enforcement vessel to the refuge.

Nominations sought for 2019 Global Ocean Refuge awards

The Global Ocean Refuge System – an initiative to incentivize designation of strongly protected MPAs across 30% of the world ocean – is seeking nominations of MPAs to receive Global Ocean Refuge status in 2019. To learn more about the program or to nominate a site, [click here](#). The nomination period is open through 31 March 2019.

Last year (2018) the system [inscribed seven Global Ocean Refuges](#). These MPAs joined the [three sites that were inscribed in the program's first year](#) (2017). The Global Ocean Refuge System is an initiative of the Marine Conservation Institute.

MPAs as a tool to support maternal health

A new World Health Organisation publication on innovations in human maternal health features a brief case study on an MPA in the Philippines. An analysis of maternal diets in the nation's Aurora Province revealed protein intake averaged only 18% of

recommendations. In response, a pilot intertidal MPA was planned in partnership with women from the local fishing organization, and focused on creating sustainable protein reserves to meet maternal needs, among other goals. Women were recruited for the MPA's monitoring and surveillance. The case is on page 13 of the report [Multisectoral Collaborations for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health](#).

New book on applying the ecosystem approach to ocean management

A new textbook – available for free – analyzes lessons learned and challenges associated with applying the ecosystem approach to different marine policy fields, including marine spatial planning, fisheries management, and biodiversity protection. It includes a chapter specifically on EU Natura 2000 sites. The 466-page book *The Ecosystem Approach in Ocean Planning and Governance: Perspectives from Europe and Beyond* is [available here](#).

MPA-related readings from around the web

[The overlooked casualty in the South China Sea dispute](#) (ASEAN Today) – The South China Sea is a geopolitical flashpoint, but an international peace park in the region could provide a way to reduce tensions.

[Indonesia mulls Komodo dragon park closure and Bali tax to fight overtourism](#) (The Telegraph) – Indonesian officials plan to close Komodo National Park for a year to allow the park's iconic dragons to recover from contact with humans.

[Going to the Galápagos Is Easier and Cheaper Than Ever. That Might Not Be a Good Thing](#) (New York Times) – The potential for overtourism and overfishing in the Galápagos National Park and Marine Reserve is raising concerns.

[Great Barrier Reef authority gives green light to dump dredging sludge](#) (The Guardian) – The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority has approved the dumping of more than 1 million tons of dredge spoil near the reef, which in turn has spurred calls for a ban on such dumping.

[Citizen Science Comes of Age](#) (Hakai Magazine) – Increasingly, scientists are relying on data gathered by volunteers to make their research happen; this article features several examples from coral reef research.

Top 5 most-viewed MPA News articles from 2018

The following were the most-viewed articles from MPA News issues released in 2018:

1. [The Big Picture: The continuing debate over the value of large vs. small MPAs, and what it means for the field](#) (May 2018)
2. [MPAs and marine litter: Snapshots of how sites are addressing the problem worldwide](#) (June 2018)
3. [Unique study of partially protected MPAs offers new insights on when they protect biodiversity and when they do not](#) (September 2018)
4. [Challenges, successes, and lessons from building effective MPA manager networks: Part II - The regional networks](#) (April 2018)
5. [IUCN moves to help countries apply marine protection: By clarifying its standards, global body hopes to inspire more ocean safeguards](#) (July 2018)

Note: Typically the most-viewed MPA News articles in any year are from that particular year. But in 2018, the most-viewed MPA News article was actually from way back in 2001: [Paper parks: Why they happen, and what can be done to change them](#) (June 2001). Although this article has been consistently popular over the years, it experienced a big surge in views last year, surpassing even our 2018 articles.

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